



# State Emergency Operations Center

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Emergency Management Division  
Washington Military Department

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## Background

When an emergency occurs, numerous agencies at the local, state, and federal level must carry out many different functions swiftly and effectively to protect life, property, the environment, and the economy in a concerted effort to restore normalcy. The number, nature, and urgency of problems during an emergency differ greatly from those during normal governmental operations.

Gathering information during an emergency, making decisions, and taking necessary actions to implement those decisions requires close coordination between key officials who may not normally work together. Decisions and response actions must be coordinated, integrated, and applied thoughtfully within some structure. A proven way to maximize coordination and application of resources in an emergency is by centralizing response actions in an emergency operations center (EOC).

The Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division, manages the state's Emergency Operations Center located on Camp Murray, near Tacoma. RCW 38.52.030(3).

## Role and Purpose

The state EOC serves as the focal point for state responses to emergencies and disasters. These emergencies or disasters are the result of natural, technological, or human-caused hazards. The numerous primary and back-up communications systems allow the state to warn local and state agencies, and the public, of an emergency and to communicate among all emergency response agencies during an event. During an emergency, representatives from other state agencies with emergency roles come to the EOC to help coordinate the state response. Federal government agencies, along with state and local volunteer organizations, also may provide representatives.

During an emergency or disaster, the EOC is designated as the central location for information gathering, hazard analysis, and response coordination. Information gathered within the EOC is used by executives to decide on emergency actions and to identify and prioritize the use of state resources needed to respond to the emergency. The EOC may issue emergency warnings or disseminate critical information and instructions to government personnel and the public who may need to take emergency protective actions.

## Contact

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